

□ 1400

So (two-thirds of those voting having not responded in the affirmative) the joint resolution was not passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 378 on July 18th I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, regarding the Federal marriage amendment, I was detained coming in from the airport, missed the vote by 4 minutes, and would have voted "nay" on the Federal marriage amendment, rollcall 378.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall 378, which I missed as a result of my being detained at the airport, I indicate for the RECORD that I would have voted "nay" had I been here for that vote.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained in meetings downtown with my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall 378 because I continue to believe the issue of what constitutes a marriage should be left to the states to determine. I also believe that we should not set a precedent by amending the constitution in a way that narrows the rights of individuals.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.J. Res. 88.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING WELFARE REFORMS

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 438) expressing the sense of the Congress that continuation of the welfare reforms provided for in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 should remain a priority.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 438

Whereas the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program established by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-193) has succeeded in moving families from welfare to work and reducing child poverty;

Whereas there has been a dramatic increase in the employment of current and former welfare recipients;

Whereas the percentage of working recipients reached an all-time high in fiscal year 1999 and held steady in fiscal years 2000 and 2001;

Whereas, in fiscal year 2004, 32 percent of adult recipients were counted as meeting TANF work participation requirements, significantly above pre-reform levels;

Whereas earnings for welfare recipients remaining on the rolls also have increased significantly, as have earnings for female-headed households;

Whereas single mothers, on average, earned \$13.50 per hour in 2004, almost three times the minimum wage;

Whereas the increases have been particularly large for the bottom 2 income quintiles, that is, those women who are most likely to be former or current welfare recipients;

Whereas welfare dependency has plummeted;

Whereas, as of September 2005, 1,887,855 families, including 4,443,170 individuals, were receiving TANF assistance, and accordingly, the number of families in the welfare caseload and the number of individuals receiving cash assistance declined 56 percent and 61 percent, respectively, since the enactment of the TANF program;

Whereas, since the enactment of welfare reform, the number of children in the United States has grown from 69,000,000 in 1995 to 73,000,000 in 2004, which is an increase of 4,000,000, yet 1,400,000 fewer children were living in poverty in 2004 than in 1995—a 14 percent decline in overall child poverty;

Whereas the poverty rates for African-American and Hispanic children also have declined remarkably—20 percent and 28 percent, respectively, since 1995;

Whereas, as a Nation, we have made substantial progress in reducing teen pregnancies and births, slowing increases in non-marital childbearing, and improving child support collections and paternity establishment;

Whereas the birth rate to teenagers declined 30 percent from its high in 1991 to 2004. The 2004 teenage birth rate of 41.2 per 1,000 women aged 15 through 19 is the lowest recorded birth rate for teenagers since 1940;

Whereas, during the period from 1991 through 2001, teenage birth rates fell in all States and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands;

Whereas such declines also have spanned age, racial, and ethnic groups;

Whereas there has been success in lowering the birth rate for both younger and older teens;

Whereas the birth rate for those aged 15 through 17 declined 43 percent since 1991, the rate for those aged 18 and 19 declined 26 percent, and the rate for African American teens—until recently the highest—declined the most—falling 47 percent from 1991 through 2004;

Whereas, since the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, child support enforcement system have grown every year, increasing from \$12,000,000,000 in fiscal year 1996 to over \$22,000,000,000 in fiscal year 2004;

Whereas the number of paternities established or acknowledged in fiscal year 2003—over 1,600,000—includes an almost 300 percent increase in paternities established through in-hospital acknowledgement programs promoted by the 1996 welfare reforms, and there were almost 915,000 paternities established this way in 2004 compared to 324,652 in 1996;

Whereas child support collections were made in nearly 8,100,000 cases in fiscal year 2004, significantly more than the almost 4,000,000 cases in which a collection was made in 1996;

Whereas the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 gave States great flexibility in the use of Federal funds to develop innovative programs to help families leave welfare and begin employment, and to encourage the formation of 2-parent families;

Whereas annual Federal funding for under the new TANF block grant program have been held constant at the all-time highs set in 1995, despite unprecedented welfare caseload declines and despite the fact that States may spend as little as 75 percent as much as they spent spending under the prior AFDC program;

Whereas total welfare and child care funds available per family increased over 130 percent between 1995 and 2004, from \$6,934 to \$16,185;

Whereas child care expenditures have quadrupled under welfare reform, rising from \$3,000,000,000 in 1995 to \$12,000,000,000 in 2004;

Whereas, under the TANF program, States have enjoyed significant new flexibility in making policy choices and investment decisions best suited to the needs of their citizens;

Whereas, despite all of these successes, there is still progress to be made;

Whereas significant numbers of welfare recipients still are not engaged in employment-related activities;

Whereas, while all States have met the overall work participation rates required by law, in an average month, only 41 percent of all TANF families with an adult participated in work activities for even a single hour that was countable toward the State's work participation rate;

Whereas, in 2002, 34 percent of all births in the United States were to unmarried women;

Whereas, despite recent progress in reducing teen pregnancy in general, with fewer teens entering marriage, the proportion of births to unmarried teens has increased dramatically to 80 percent in 2002 from 30 percent in 1970;

Whereas the negative consequences of out-of-wedlock birth on the mother, the child, the family, and society are well documented;

Whereas the negative consequences include increased likelihood of welfare dependency, increased risks of low birth weight, poor cognitive development, child abuse and neglect, teen parenthood, and decreased likelihood of having an intact marriage during adulthood, and these outcomes result despite the often heroic struggles of mostly single mothers to care for their families;

Whereas there has been a dramatic rise in cohabitation as marriages have declined;

Whereas an estimated 40 percent of children are expected to live in a cohabiting-parent family at some point during their childhood;

Whereas children in single-parent households and cohabiting-parent households are at much higher risk of child abuse than children in intact married families;

Whereas children who live apart from their biological fathers are, on average, more likely to be poor, experience educational, health, emotional, and psychological problems, be victims of child abuse, engage in criminal

behavior, and become involved with the juvenile justice system than their peers who live with their married, biological mother and father;

Whereas, despite the strenuous efforts of single mothers to care for their children, a child living with a single mother is nearly 5 times as likely to be poor as a child living in a married-couple family; and

Whereas, in 2003, in married-couple families, the child poverty rate was 8.6 percent; in households headed by a single mother the poverty rate was 41.7 percent: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that increasing success in moving families from welfare to work, as well as in promoting healthy marriage and other means of improving child well-being, as promoted by the welfare reforms in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, are very important Government interests and should remain priorities for the responsible Federal and State agencies in the years ahead for assisting needy families and others at risk of poverty and dependence on government benefits.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of the concurrent resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 438. This resolution does something we don't do enough of in this institution: It takes a look back at what Congress tried to do in the previous years and assesses whether we got it right. As the text of the resolution suggests, many people, including some former critics, think we got it right.

Mr. Speaker, the results of the 1996 welfare reform are remarkable in terms of achieving and in some cases exceeding the goals the Nation laid out when Congress took on this challenging issue. Former Wisconsin Governor and Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson has called welfare reform one of the most successful social policy changes in U.S. history, and I think he is right. In terms of reducing dependence, promoting work and earnings, and reducing poverty, it would be hard to mask the outcomes of these reforms.

I would also like to thank my colleague CLAY SHAW for his steadfast leadership and tireless work to enact these remarkable reforms. Welfare reform did not happen overnight. And it would not have happened without his strong leadership.

Ten years ago today, this House passed what went on to become the landmark 1996 welfare reform law. At that time nearly 12 million parents and children were dependent on the government. Today, after 10 years of reforms and much success, that number is down to fewer than 5 million individuals dependent on welfare checks for support, a decline of an unprecedented 64 percent, almost two-thirds. Millions of those families now collect a paycheck instead of a welfare check. Since welfare reform was enacted, we have seen a sharp increase in work among welfare recipients. This is a stark contrast to the Nation's former welfare program under which there was no incentive to work. In fact, the prior program actually punished work. But today, because of welfare reform, work among those on welfare has more than doubled. And to support working families, the amount taxpayers provide for child care has tripled from \$4 billion to nearly \$12 billion today.

Back in 1996, welfare reform opponents argued that if enacted, this law would result in millions of additional children living in poverty. However, they were wrong with this prediction as they were with all their other predictions about what this law would accomplish. Compared to 1996, 1.4 million fewer children are in poverty today. This is a direct result of the pro-work, pro-family policies passed in 1996 and which are still in place today.

Earlier this year, the House accompanied by the Senate sent President Bush legislation to extend and strengthen the 1996 reforms to help even more low-income parents go to work. All States are now busy revamping their programs to meet that challenge. Based on the results of the 1996 reforms, we should have great confidence that millions more families will succeed in finding and keeping jobs in the years ahead. That is something every Member and, indeed, every American should support.

Again, I would like to thank CLAY SHAW for all his work in this area over so many years. I look forward to continuing to work in the years ahead to support all families in their efforts to end their dependence on government assistance.

I urge all my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We have before us today a Republican resolution that should be backdated to the last Democratic President, if it is to be honest, because when America actually made great strides in decreasing poverty it was during that administration. But that is not what we are about today. This is a PR event.

H. Con. Res. 438 is a Republican attempt to take a victory lap on something they have done right. I mean on the war and gas prices and everything

else, they cannot say anything. But in the run-up to this election, they are borrowing the vision and the success under the leadership of Mr. Clinton.

The resolution is not about reducing poverty. It is about increasing Republican poll numbers. America's poor and disadvantaged deserve a fair shake, not a glad hand.

It is unmistakably clear that domestic priorities under the current Republican administration and Republican Congress have focused on the rich, not the middle class, not the working class, and certainly not the disadvantaged class. And the record will show the great strides we have made to reduce poverty peaked in the year 2000, the beginning of the Bush administration, and they have been on a downward spiral ever since. The rate of poverty has been climbing during the Bush administration. The number of two-parent families living in poverty has increased during the Bush administration, and the number of American children living in poverty has also increased during the Bush administration.

Now, you have to draw the line somewhere; so I intend to vote "no" because I want a real agenda for reducing poverty in America. Congress needs a renewed commitment, not a disingenuous celebration. It was the pre-Bush economy that boosted the value of work. And that is not all. This resolution ignores the domestic priorities championed by Democrats that have made a meaningful difference in the lives of ordinary Americans, like the earned income tax credit.

Instead of a resolution meant to increase the poll numbers, we ought to be passing legislation to increase the minimum wage. We have tried and we have tried, and you can really do something for poverty if you would do it. In one stroke we could do more to reduce poverty in this country than all the resolutions that you have offered since the President took office 6 years ago.

That is an honest assessment of the situation. There is a concurrent resolution I authored with Mr. LEVIN. Since the Republicans will not allow us to consider it, let me take a moment to discuss it. It offers an honest assessment of where we are today. It highlights the progress made in the second half of the 1990s on poverty and unemployment. It also makes it clear that poverty has increased since 2000 with more than 5 million more Americans falling into poverty, including 1.5 million children. If you call that success, it is a strange success.

The percentage of single moms who are working today has declined by 4 percent since the beginning of the Bush administration. And we are sticking the States with new unfunded mandates; so there will be much less money available in the next several years to deal with this growing problem. That is the Republican solution.

Our resolution makes reducing poverty a national priority, not wishful thinking, by supporting the States,

who are the Nation's first responders in fighting poverty. We would like to have a great debate over whether or not America's best interest is served by a Republican resolution created for the campaign trail or by a Democratic resolution created to meet America's needs. As it now stands, the debate is about Republican photo ops and press releases, which I am sure have already been mailed.

This resolution is designed by the Republicans so that they can try to take a victory lap after some successes in the welfare. But there cannot be a victory lap because the race is not over. Poverty is up, wages are down, and the working poor are losing in the Bush economy.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It would be nice if today we could all work in a bipartisan way to take credit for something that Congress has done which has been so incredibly successful. I really regret the negative tone I hear from my good friends on the other side of the aisle.

They made the comment that President Clinton had signed this. I think we should let the history speak for itself.

□ 1415

The fact is, after the Democrats opposed this legislation every inch of the way, opposing it in subcommittee, opposing it in the full committee, opposing it on the House floor, voting against it, and then having President Clinton vetoing it, not once, but twice, and only before the election where he was afraid that maybe the people might throw him out if he continued to oppose it did he finally sign it, did we finally get it. And after these dire predictions that the sky was going to fall in, that we have these incredible results that we have, again, it would be nice if we could all take credit here for something we have done well. It is regrettable we can't.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and ask unanimous consent that the gentleman control the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) will control the balance of the time.

There was no objection.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), who has a different view of welfare reform as the Governor of a State who did a tremendous job in that capacity at the time we were changing welfare reform and the way it served America.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for the wonderful job he has done on this.

We started on welfare reform in Delaware very early on, long before the Federal Government started to look at it, and, obviously, it involved people

having to go to classes and having to go to work. It was rather unique at the time.

I remember going to the first class, it was 19 people, 18 women and a man, and I sort of trembled. I was Governor of Delaware and I was a little nervous about that because I figured they wouldn't be receptive at all.

My mind was completely turned around going to that class when those 19 individuals said thank you for giving us the opportunity. They were being educated at that point. I went to their graduation later. They then went on to get jobs, and they subsequently went off welfare and became contributing citizens.

I can't tell you the value of this program, the self-esteem of individuals who have been through this. You can look at the statistics, be it 40, 50, 60 percent, in the various States, and that is about where it is, for the reduction of people on welfare. And you say perhaps it saved money, although, frankly, it doesn't save a lot of money. It costs a lot to educate and day care and everything else.

But the bottom line is that we have actually helped individuals. Indeed, it is a program which I think Republicans and Democrats have been supporting and should take credit for. And I certainly give some credit to President Clinton, because I worked with him as a Governor on this program as well.

But it has made a huge difference in their mindset. It has made a huge difference in their families' mindset. It has made a difference in the children of these individuals, who see their parents going off to work and earning a living, perhaps having a little more spending money and being able to hold themselves high as far as their immediate society is concerned.

This has been a highly successful program. It is true, I think, what Tommy Thompson said about it, and that is it is perhaps the greatest social reform program we have seen in this country.

Every now and then something comes along which really can make a difference in the lives of people. I just would like to thank all those who worked on this, and I worked with some of them, mostly members of the Ways and Means Committee when they were working with CLAY SHAW and others, because there was a lot of opposition to this.

But, indeed, it is a program which worked, it is a program which should be continued and expanded if possible, and it is a program for which I think we will always look back and be able to take some good positive credit for.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. STARK).

(Mr. STARK asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STARK. The resolution before us, Mr. Speaker, ignores the realities of increasing child poverty, stagnating wages and lost opportunities for those

families and children left behind by the so-called success of the welfare reform. Pilot SHAW has landed his plane on the aircraft carrier and said "mission accomplished," and the carrier sank.

This resolution, looking at a 10-year window, ignores the disturbing trends of the last 5 years during the Bush Republican Presidency. Total poverty has increased for 4 consecutive years, and more than 37 million people are living in poverty today. Child poverty has been on the rise for 5 straight years, and 13 million children are struggling in poverty today. Real wages for low-income workers have been stagnant for 5 consecutive years. It is time for the minimum wage to be raised, but the Republicans don't care to represent poor people, only rich.

Nearly one in three poor single women are not working and not receiving TANF assistance, and fewer than half of the families eligible for TANF receive it. Child care funding under the Republicans is \$11 billion short of what CBO estimates the States need. The administration funneled \$2 billion alone to religious organizations, trusting in this faith-based stuff, and the GAO has found the Bush faith-based initiative lacks accountability and safeguards against discrimination. And this has been, as Congressman SHAW would claim, the most successful social policy in history.

What is it, sir, that you don't understand about the word "failure"? Instead of engaging in this political public relations charade, we should be working on a bipartisan basis to confront realities of poverty in this country. We should move ourselves into the present and work to ensure that we provide States with the resources they need to move families out of poverty, instead of wasting time defining marriage.

We should focus on real programs that help families improve their lives. We need to improve their lives, expand the Earned Income Tax Credit, raise the minimum wage, increase access to Medicaid and Medicare, CHIP and food stamps. We need to provide work supports such as sufficient funding for children, remove the barriers to employment, provide education and training opportunities and get to work and solve the problem of poverty, instead of making tax cuts for the very rich and ignoring the middle class and doing it on the backs of the poor. That is the Republican way. The Democrats' way is to help everybody in this country rise out of poverty.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH).

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman who as chairman of the Human Resources Subcommittee when I was a freshman was one of the key players in steering the welfare reform through.

I was a freshman when our new majority came to power and was determined to do things differently. As a result, we were able to push forward on a key initiative to change the welfare system in a fundamental way. We were successful. We came up against terrific resistance, initially resistance from the administration; but we were able to steer it through. Ten years later it is clear that we were successful.

As the gentleman said, this is a profoundly successful social reform. It is the most successful reform for bringing people out of poverty that we saw in the 20th century.

We have seen dramatic reductions in welfare dependence, fewer families in poverty, increases in work and earnings and declines in waste, fraud and abuse of welfare benefits. And this has occurred, I believe, in the context of a clear contrast, because they took a completely different position when we put forward this new welfare reform initiative.

May I quote the gentleman who is managing the time on the other side. It was just 10 years ago that he said of this legislation: "It will put 1½ million to 2½ million children into poverty. In about 1998, you are going to start to see the impacts on cities, with more homeless families. They can't pay their rent. You will wind up with people living under bridges and in cardboard boxes." That is what Mr. McDERMOTT said in 1995.

The reality is that we brought people out of poverty, we have brought the caseloads down, we have given the States more flexibility to deal with welfare problems. And it was this majority that fought them, fought them successfully, got a bill to the White House that that President could sign, and, in the process, started a transformation of our welfare system which continues today.

Mr. Speaker, we should celebrate this landmark and move forward with further reform of the welfare system.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4½ minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN).

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, the majority says they want to recognize the past. What you are doing in this resolution is to twist it. So let me say again what the facts were.

The bill was vetoed by Mr. Clinton, by the President, because of inadequate child support and inadequate health care provisions. He so stated. He had started this effort to reform welfare, but the inadequacies in the bills that came before him required a veto.

What was the result of the veto, of the two vetoes? Money was put in for child care and for health care. It is ironic that this resolution brags about the amount of money for child care. Without those vetoes, a lot of those moneys never would have been in welfare reform.

The same is true of transitional Medicaid.

So come here, but don't, for totally partisan electoral purposes twist the history of this. You are twisting it. Maybe you think it will gain you a few votes, but you lose your credibility and you lose any chance of proceeding on a bipartisan basis.

You did the same thing in the bill that was passed just some months ago on welfare reform. You cut child support. This resolution talks about child support collections increasing; but in the bill that was passed recently, you made arrangements for a reduction in child support estimated by CBO to be \$8.4 billion over the next 10 years.

You talk in this resolution about giving States "great flexibility in the use of Federal funds." That was one of the advantages of the 1996 legislation and that is one reason why a good number of Democrats voted for it.

In the 2006 legislation, you reduced the flexibility of the States. I want to just refer to some of the programs that the States have used that would probably be disentangled by this 2006 legislation:

The Portland Program, that has some strategies so that people can upgrade their skills and get out of poverty. The Corpus Christi Employment, Retention and Advance Program. The Maine Program, that does rely on some higher education, including a 4-year degree. And also the Utah Program, that was very advanced in terms of addressing substance abuse and mental health. So you essentially have reduced the flexibility of the States.

Let me talk for a moment about poverty and what was the main problem with the 2006 legislation. The data that we have show this, more or less, that 60 to 70 percent of the people who have moved from welfare to work have been earning less than 42 percent of the median average wage in their States.

We were hopeful in the 2006 legislation that we would take a further step in welfare reform, that we would help people not only move from welfare to work, but from welfare to work that would take them out of poverty.

You, on a strictly partisan basis, did not even bother to talk to us. You made no effort. You would not even work with us to try to provide a law that would help people move from welfare to work.

So I regret your spurning any effort to make this resolution bipartisan. I think instead of recognizing the past, you are mainly twisting it; and there has been a failure of this Congress to take the next steps in welfare reform so people move from poverty into something beyond it when they move from welfare to work.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is amazing, the gentleman who just left the well, when he would say this is a partisan resolution. I don't think the Republican name is in this resolution whatsoever. It is a figment of his imagination.

This was a team effort. President Clinton did sign this bill. This is not a partisan resolution. So why don't you join with us and rejoice in what we have accomplished.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER), a distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 438, of which I am an original cosponsor, which expresses the sense of the Congress that historic welfare reforms begun with the 1996 Welfare Reform Act should continue forward and continue to remain a priority.

I wrote in 1979 that it was not uncommon for a government program to be begun for noble worthy purposes and end up becoming an end in itself.

□ 1430

The more assistance that was distributed, the more necessary the program, and the means became the ends. Before the consideration of the welfare reform bill 10 years ago, there was no indication that some of these government programs would be improved, much less encourage self-sufficiency. This is not surprising, given how the welfare reform bill was described on this floor as, "the most cruel and shortsighted view on public policy I have seen in 20 years", and, "a mean-spirited attack on children and poor families in America that fails every test of true welfare reform", and "a cruel attack on America's children".

Well, as we mark the 10th anniversary of the signing of the bill, the statistics show the successes. Welfare caseloads have declined almost 65 percent. The poverty rate has declined. The child poverty rate has declined. The number of children lifted from poverty is 1.4 million, and the number of adults receiving welfare and working has more than doubled since 1996. The employment rate of never-married mothers has increased by almost 35 percent.

We have achieved great progress in eradicating poverty in this Nation. Ten years ago, thousands of poor people who deserve much more from their government were unwitting pawns in the game for power over the lives of others. The 1996 Welfare Reform Act has been enormously successful and we must continue to help those who truly need assistance while encouraging those who can support their families to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I thank my friend for yielding me the time.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL).

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, this marks the 10th anniversary of the passage of the 1996 welfare bill, a measure I voted for. And the legislation certainly was not perfect, but the system that it supplanted

was even worse. Ten years on, instead of having a pep rally for TANF, I think that we ought to be doing is having a serious conversation about whether the program is being implemented in a way that effectively and realistically moves everyone who can work into a job so that they might support their family.

With Bill Clinton, the TANF program rightly demanded that able-bodied people do everything possible to find and keep a job. But it also recognized the fact that single moms needed help with child care and transportation in order to successfully and permanently transition out of public assistance. So the Clinton budgets provided that traditional assistance.

The Clinton budgets also made enforcement of child support payments a top priority, which gleaned billions of dollars, that pulled thousands of women and children out of poverty. Bill Clinton insisted on an increase in the minimum wage and an expanded earned income tax credit, which helped people earning the lowest wages support themselves.

And the results spoke for themselves. Even as welfare caseloads dropped, poverty rates fell for every year that Bill Clinton was in office. So what has happened in the last 5 years? Child care, cut. Food stamps, cut. Medicaid, cut. Child support enforcement, cut.

So it is a disappointment but not a surprise that poverty rates are once again on the rise. According to the Census Bureau in 2004, there were 13 million children living under the poverty line. Almost one American child in five grows up in a family that cannot pay for the bare essentials of life like food, shelter, and clothing.

How can we let this happen? Today I want people to listen to this. Today a minimum wage worker in America who puts in 40 hours a week and never takes a vacation day, listen to this, they earn, at minimum wage, \$10,700 a year before taxes.

That is not enough for a single mother with one child to clear the poverty line. But I think it is the new face of compassionate conservatism. That is a full-time working mom who cannot possibly make ends meet for herself and her child. One in five kids in this country grows up in poverty.

The welfare bill was supposed to counteract these trends, and when Bill Clinton was in office it was doing a good job. But the programs that helped welfare reform demonstrate progress like child support enforcement, child care assistance, have been eviscerated by this Congress and this administration. But we always have time here for tax cuts for rich people. If we cannot take care of Paris Hilton, who can? This welfare bill was a good start, and if properly implemented, it was during the Clinton years, we would still be on the path to reform.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would remind the gentleman in the well that it is rare today

that people work for minimum wage. But those who do earn \$10,700 a year, they also get an earned income tax credit of \$4,000. They also get food stamps worth \$2,000. They get rent subsidies which varies.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HART).

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. And I am somewhat mystified by some of the claims made by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. I and several of my colleagues spent a significant amount of time making sure that additional moneys were put into this legislation when it was passed to make sure that there would be more money for child care.

That was signed by the President and is current law today. We have increased assistance to women who were on welfare, who are now working. We needed to do that in order to make sure that their children would be safe. Our goal of welfare reform was about family growth and security and future financial security.

Our goal was certainly not to put the children in jeopardy, and part of that complete goal was to make sure that they had availability of child care. We have worked to make sure it is available at different times of the day. We have worked to make sure that it is available and convenient, and obviously that those who are providers are providing safe child care.

Another point that I think is very important to refute is that there is something wrong with the direction we are moving in, asking for people to work more hours. Once they commit to receiving welfare, they commit to work more hours, and they do so. What we found, the statistics show that when people start to work, obviously, their incomes will rise. They begin to climb the ladder of future success and their children do not live in poverty.

I want to repeat this point, because again it is the most important goal that we had of welfare reform, to make sure that from generation to generation children are not living in poverty. And children have been lifted from poverty as a result of our welfare reform, and more will continue to be lifted out of poverty as a result of more work requirements. These children will grow up with a great example of industrious working parents, and they will do the same.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress has a lot of missions before us. One of them certainly is to help encourage people to grow in their abilities, to grow in their talents and their willingness to teach their children. This welfare reform bill has helped us in all of those counts. I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, this resolution is a celebration of bad pol-

icy. I voted against it when it was a Clinton proposal, and I voted against it because my fear was, based on having been a past welfare mom, my fear was that ultimately it would be the kids who suffered. And how right I was.

So when the Congress reauthorized the welfare program recently, not a single Democrat voted for it, because Democrats know that what this bill does is fail to help families reach economic independence. Instead it pushes families off welfare, into the workforce without sufficient education, without adequate child care, and without a path to self-sufficiency.

If the Republican leadership was truly interested in improving families' welfare, it would be debating and passing an increase in the minimum wage, and we would be doing that today, instead of talking about celebrating welfare. The sad fact is that this Congress is more interested that fewer people get help than whether fewer people need help. And that is a shame.

I encourage my colleagues, please oppose this resolution, a resolution that is trying to celebrate bad policy. A policy that keeps children in poverty.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the gentlewoman who just spoke that the poverty rate among children has dropped 13 percent since the passage of this resolution, and, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, could you tell us the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 4½ minutes, and the gentleman from Florida has 6 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, we go through a policy like this in 20 minutes. The Republican policy toward children is, you have no entitlement to anything. The point of welfare reform was to take away the entitlement of health and welfare, and housing and food from children, to take away the entitlement and put it to 50 States to whatever they want to do.

And we have 50 different plans in this country. The Republicans define welfare, people, those eligible for TANF, in such a way that you can drive down the numbers. You can push people off into work. And there is nobody on this side who has not worked in their life, who does not think it is a good idea to work.

But what we believe is that you ought to work for a wage that is fair and provides a decent living. The Republicans for the entire period this has been in place have refused to raise the minimum wage.

You want to drive people into poverty, and you did drive them into poverty, because when they are in poverty you can make them do anything. That is the way you keep the costs down in business, have a workforce of people who have to work for the minimum wage, and that is it for them.

Now, you have cut Medicare. Medicare in every State in this country is

in a terrible mess. There are 300,000 children eligible for child care in California who do not have access because there is no money. You say to the mothers, go out and work. Leave your kids at home, leave them a package of graham crackers, leave them a television, and leave them with their 12-year-old sister. That is the Republican plan.

You also take away their housing benefits. When they go off of TANF they do not get access to those housing benefits they had before. So you take away every single piece of security for a child who knows they have a home, who knows there is going to be food on the table, who is going to have a parent there when they come home from school. And then you ask yourself why you have a drug problem in this country. Why you have kids getting in trouble everywhere, why the prisons are full.

This is the result of a public policy that says we do not believe in the common good. We cannot tax the rich, oh, no, no, we must not tax the rich, they need another wall around their compound. But you can put kids out on the street, with their mother working down at the local motel cleaning beds for \$5.15 an hour, that is all right with you. It is that that we object to.

It is not that we do not think people should work, we just think they should work for a decent living, a decent wage, and you will not give them that. You want to define success. The press release will say, we have reduced the welfare rolls from 5 million, as it was in 2000, to about 1.9 today.

But you will say nothing of the human misery you have created by these policies. The reason none of us voted for the reauthorization was, you put no additional money in for child care. And you cut the benefits for health care. And you do not take care of the needs of the kids. This is not about adults. Adults can make it. But it is a question about whether we as Americans, as a part of the common good, think children are entitled to a decent and safe childhood.

And your answer is, we cut the welfare rolls, raise the flag, let's march around and have a big parade and we will send out press releases, we cut the welfare rolls. But poverty has increased. You have 5 million more people in poverty since Mr. Bush became President of the United States.

That is not an enviable record; 1½ million more children are in poverty. How can you celebrate that?

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1445

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know quite where to start in correcting the gentleman from Washington. First of all, he said that we didn't increase child care. Well, we had just done over a \$1 billion increase, and that is just within

the last few months. I would say that the gentleman's memory is a little short.

He also talked about a secret Republican agenda. I was in charge of this bill 10 years ago, and I insisted that we did not do any of that. In fact, I don't know of anybody that was trying to do that. I maintained that we had to keep up the food programs, we had to keep up the Medicaid payments, taking care of the health care. We had to take care of the kids. We had to produce child care, in addition to all of this and all of the other programs that go along with the poverty program.

But what did we expect? We expected people to climb out of poverty. We are going to help them, but they are going to help themselves.

The problem of those who still oppose welfare reform is they have no faith. They didn't have any faith in the human spirit. We did have faith in the human spirit, and I can tell you the real champions, the real heroes of welfare reform are those who pull themselves out of poverty.

It is not the Members of Congress or the Senate that are sitting on this floor. It is the single mom, and she is the hero.

We started this program about 15, 16 years ago. We worked hard on it for many, many years. At every turn, we recognized the fragile nature of those that we were trying to rescue. Oh, we had a poverty program that was being guarded so carefully by those that wanted to pay people not to work, not to get married and have kids, the most destructive behavior you could possibly have.

I remember when we came to this floor and debated this bill. Some of the comments that were made back then, and I will read one of the worst ones, and I won't even mention the Member's name because I think it is so bad. It says: read the proposal, read the small print, read the Republican contract. They are coming for our children, they are coming for the poor. They are coming for the sick, the elderly and the disabled.

That is the stuff we were listening to on this floor when we were on a rescue mission. Through the debate on July 18, 1996, after several of the Democrat Members, some of whom have spoken today, spoke against the bill, President Clinton announced that he was coming on to television. We retired back into the Cloakroom to see what he was going to say. He looked right into the TV cameras, and he said, I am going to sign this bill.

Well, that brought about some Democratic votes, and it made it truly a bipartisan bill. Since then, the statistical information that is out there is history. Let me run down just some of the things that welfare reform has accomplished.

Welfare caseloads are now down by 64 percent, as nearly 8 million parents and children no longer receive welfare. The overall poverty rate dropped 7 per-

cent, the child poverty dropped 13 percent, the poverty rate of young children in female-headed families, the group most likely to go on welfare, dropped 15 percent from 1996 to 2004.

Compared with 1996, 1.4 million fewer children lived in poverty in 2004. That is a victory. That is a victory for the human race. That is a victory for the poor Americans. The number of adults on welfare who work has more than doubled since welfare reform. More broadly, the work of all never-married mothers has surged 34 percent since 1996.

I will never forget, at one of our hearings, and I think, Mr. McDERMOTT, you were there, when one of the welfare workers came in and was bragging about one of her clients who went to school. One of the young kids had gone to school, and he raised his hand to get the attention of the teacher. The teacher finally looked down and said, What do you want? He says, My momma went to work today.

What a wonderful thing. That mother who had nothing to do all day but sit around for the postman to come and bring her a check is now a role model for that child. What a difference that this has made.

Yes, this was a rescue program. We paid a lot of money for job training and things in order to accomplish this welfare reform package, and it has worked.

I can tell you I was stunned when the President said he was going to sign it, because all of a sudden I realized, my God, look what we have done, look what we have done. Now I can look back with great pride and see what this Congress did, what we accomplished, that rescue mission that took so many people out of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the bill.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the welfare reforms provided in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The House is considering H. Con. Res. 438 that expresses the sense of the Congress that continuation of the welfare reforms provided for in the 1996 welfare reform act should remain a priority. The House Resolution marks the 10th anniversary of the 1996 Republican-led enactment of welfare reform.

I strongly support H. Con. Res. 438 that celebrates 10 years of success in reducing welfare rolls and helping children and families escape from the cycle of poverty. Ten years ago, Republicans decided it was time to reform our broken welfare system and give welfare recipients the tools they needed to escape the system and build a better life. Today, we can see the results of those efforts—a 64 percent decrease in welfare caseloads, a sharp decline in child poverty, and a dramatic increase in the number of welfare recipients who work.

Since Republicans have passed welfare reform in 1996, the overall poverty rate has dropped 7 percent and 1.4 million fewer children are living in poverty. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of H. Con. Res. 438. Support of this resolution is support for

continuing to move from welfare to work more quickly and promoting and encouraging stable, healthy families.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 438.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 498) supporting the goals and ideals of School Bus Safety Week.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 498

Whereas approximately 480,000 yellow school buses carry 25 million children to and from school every weekday;

Whereas America's 480,000 school buses comprise the largest mass transportation fleet in the country, 2.5 times the size of all other forms of mass transportation—transit, intercity buses, commercial airlines, and rail—combined;

Whereas during the school year, school buses make more than 50 million passenger trips daily carrying the Nation's future—our children;

Whereas school bus transportation is eight times safer than traveling in a passenger vehicle and is the safest form of ground transportation available;

Whereas school buses meet higher construction, equipment, and inspection standards than any other vehicle, and school bus drivers meet higher qualification, training, and testing standards than any other drivers;

Whereas according to the National Academy of Sciences, an average of 820 students are killed annually during school transportation hours, but less than 2 percent of them are school bus passengers;

Whereas despite the industry's best efforts, accidents still happen;

Whereas an average of seven school-age passengers are killed in school bus crashes each year, and an average of 19 children are killed each year getting on and off the bus;

Whereas most of those killed are children aged five to seven, and most often those children are killed in the area immediately surrounding the bus—either by a passing vehicle or by the bus itself;

Whereas School Bus Safety Week, which is celebrated in more than 40 States and sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), was created to remind all students of the best ways to get on and off the bus in an effort to enhance the safety of the Nation's children;

Whereas School Bus Safety Week, which dates back to 1966, also recognizes the hard work and dedication of school transportation personnel, especially the many school bus drivers who ensure a safe journey each and every day; and

Whereas School Bus Safety Week, celebrated the third week in October, promotes awareness through local and State poster

and speech contests, lessons utilizing school bus safety community awareness kits, and other activities built around themes that raise awareness of school bus safety issues: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives supports the goals and ideals of School Bus Safety Week.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MARCHANT) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 498 offered by the distinguished gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN). This resolution would support the goals and ideals of a National School Bus Safety Week.

In our Nation, approximately 22.5 million children ride school buses to and from school each day, which accounts for 54 percent of all students attending grade school. In fact, the more than 440,000 public school buses travel approximately 5 billion miles each year, comprising the largest mass transportation fleet in the country, 2½ times the size of all other forms of mass transportation, and according to statistics, representing the safest form of highway transportation.

Even so, according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, each year for the past 11 years, an average of 35 school-age children have died in school bus-related traffic accidents. This is why it is vital that drivers, mechanics and supervisors, as well as parents and children, observe certain rules and regulations pertaining to all the operations of school bus safety.

The week of October 15 through October 21 will educate children around the country about school bus safety precautions with special activities such as poster contests to help bring the valuable information to our Nation's children.

I urge all Members to come together to encourage the educational importance of a School Bus Safety Week by adopting H. Res. 498.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, students are at a much greater risk while traveling to and from school than at any other time during their school day. During the

1997–98 school year, about 800 children from the ages of 5 through 18 were killed during normal school transportation hours, while traveling by passenger car, foot, bicycle, public transportation or school bus. Although school buses are the safest form of highway transportation, they are not fail-safe.

The most dangerous part of the school bus ride is getting on and off the school bus. Fatalities that occur when students board and exit school buses account for approximately three times as many school bus-related fatalities than for fatalities that occur when the school buses are occupied. The area around the bus when the bus is loading and unloading is called the danger zone. The danger zone is comprised of the areas outside of the bus where the children are in the most danger of not being seen by the driver. It is the 10 feet in front of the bus where the driver is too high to see a child, 10-foot-long blind spots that run along both sides of the bus, and the area behind the school bus.

The goal of National School Bus Safety Week is to ensure safe, efficient, economical and high-quality transportation for school children on their trips to and from school and school-related activities. This is certainly a goal we all can support, and I urge my colleagues to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to my distinguished colleague, the Congressman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me this time and for managing this resolution and for his comments, as well as those of our distinguished colleague from Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, last October, I introduced House Resolution 498, which supports the goals and ideals promoted by School Bus Safety Week. This bill certainly has bipartisan support with 62 cosponsors. Also, all three national school bus associations are in support of this resolution: the National Association of Pupil Transportation, the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation, and the National School Transportation Association.

America's 480,000 school buses comprise the largest mass transportation fleet in the country, 2½ times the size of all other forms of mass transportation, transit, intercity buses, commercial airlines, and rail combined.

During the school year, school buses make more than 50 million passenger trips daily. School Bus Safety Week, which is celebrated in more than 40 States and sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, was created to remind all students of the best ways to get on and off the bus and of other ways to enhance the safety of our Nation's children.